



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

MEDIA RELEASE

29 April 2010

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT
WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Australia and the United States of America have agreed to strengthen emergency management cooperation including during bushfires, major storms and other severe natural disasters, under a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed today in Washington.

Under the MOU, Emergency Management Australia (EMA) and the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will create a framework to facilitate greater cooperation and coordination during significant disasters and emergencies.

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, and Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, signed the *Australia-United States Emergency Management Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* in the presence of the Deputy Administrator of FEMA, Richard Serino, and Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department, Roger Wilkins.

"The MOU establishes an important disaster preparedness link between our two countries and will enable us to work cooperatively together to prevent, respond and to recover from significant natural disaster events." Mr McClelland said.

Agreed arrangements between the United States and Australia under the MOU include:

- exchanging technical experts and specialists in emergency management between countries;
- sharing information on emergency management frameworks and public awareness programs relating to preparedness for natural disasters;
- undertaking professional development for emergency management personnel; and
- exchanging 'lessons learned' experiences from natural disaster events.

Australia and the United States share a long history of helping each other during significant natural disasters or emergency events, including most recently, the 'Black Saturday' bushfires in Victoria and the Californian wildfires.

This MOU will build on these experiences by strengthening the existing ties between emergency management personnel and between individual States, Territories and emergency management agencies in order to increase the capacity of both countries to deal with emergencies and protect our communities.

Media Contact: Adam Siddique 0407 473 630